

have 5 legislative days to revise and extend their remarks and include extraneous material on the bill under consideration.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from Arizona?

There was no objection.

Mr. GRIJALVA. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Speaker, let me begin by commending Congressman DON YOUNG, the ranking Republican on the Committee on Natural Resources, for introducing H.R. 50, the Multinational Species Conservation Funds Reauthorization Act of 2007. This bill would authorize two important international wildlife conservation laws, the African Elephant Conservation Act and the Rhinoceros and Tiger Conservation Act.

Mr. Speaker, illegal poaching, habitat loss and other factors have pushed African elephants, rhinoceroses and tigers dangerously close to extinction. H.R. 50 authorizes funding through fiscal year 2012 for scientific research, management, law enforcement and public education activities used to conserve and protect these keystone wildlife species and their habitat.

Congress has provided \$26.9 million, which has been leveraged through matching funds and in-kind contributions to generate more than \$96.1 million for international species conservation. This has been an excellent investment for the Federal Government.

We support this noncontroversial bill, and urge all Members on both sides to vote for this important conservation bill.

Mr. Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

Mrs. McMORRIS RODGERS. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Speaker, I rise in strong support of H.R. 50. This legislation, introduced by the distinguished ranking Republican on the Natural Resources Committee, the Honorable DON YOUNG, will extend the African Elephant Conservation Act and the Rhinoceros and Tiger Conservation Act. This legislation builds upon the proven success of these two conservation funds and allows the Secretary of the Interior to continue to approve badly needed conservation grants for the next 5 years. These acts have been two of the most effective conservation laws ever approved by the United States Congress.

Mr. Speaker, I urge adoption of this legislation.

Mr. Speaker, I yield back the balance of my time.

Mr. GRIJALVA. Mr. Speaker, I yield back the balance of my time.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from Arizona (Mr. GRIJALVA) that the House suspend the rules and pass the bill, H.R. 50, as amended.

The question was taken; and (two-thirds being in the affirmative) the rules were suspended and the bill, as amended, was passed.

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

ASIAN ELEPHANT CONSERVATION REAUTHORIZATION ACT OF 2007

Mr. GRIJALVA. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the bill (H.R. 465) to reauthorize the Asian Elephant Conservation Act of 1997, as amended.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The text of the bill is as follows:

H.R. 465

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,

SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.

This Act may be cited as the "Asian Elephant Conservation Reauthorization Act of 2007".

SEC. 2. REAUTHORIZATION AND AMENDMENT OF ASIAN ELEPHANT CONSERVATION ACT OF 1997.

(a) NOTICE OF APPROVAL OF PROJECT PROPOSAL.—Section 5(c)(2)(C) of the Asian Elephant Conservation Act of 1997 (16 U.S.C. 4264(c)(2)(C)) is amended by striking “, the Administrator, and each of those countries” and inserting “and the Administrator”.

(b) ADMINISTRATIVE EXPENSES.—Section 8(b) of the Asian Elephant Conservation Act of 1997 (16 U.S.C. 4266(b)) is amended by striking “\$80,000” and inserting “\$100,000”.

(c) AUTHORIZATION OF APPROPRIATIONS.—Section 8(a) of the Asian Elephant Conservation Act of 1997 (16 U.S.C. 4266(a)) is amended by striking “2001, 2002, 2003, 2004, 2005, 2006, and 2007” and inserting “2007 through 2012”.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentleman from Arizona (Mr. GRIJALVA) and the gentleman from Washington (Mrs. McMORRIS RODGERS) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Arizona.

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. GRIJALVA. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members have 5 legislative days within which to revise and extend their remarks and include extraneous material on this bill.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from Arizona?

There was no objection.

Mr. GRIJALVA. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Speaker, I commend my colleague, Congressman JIM SAXTON, for introducing H.R. 465, the Asian Elephant Conservation Reauthorization Act of 2007. H.R. 465 would authorize the Asian Elephant Conservation Act through fiscal year 2012. This law authorizes grants to be issued for the survival of the Asian elephant in the wild.

Unfortunately, Mr. Speaker, the status of the Asian elephant remains tenuous. Fewer than 4,000 Asian elephants are found throughout the forests and savannas of South Asia. Approximately 16,000 of these animals are held in captivity. The captive elephants are used to assist people in timber harvest, forest clearing and agriculture. In the wild, populations remain under heavy stress from several factors, especially habitat loss and deforestation.

Since the first grant was awarded in 1997, more than \$10.3 million in matching contributions or in-kind support have been generated by leveraging the \$7.8 million contribution made available by the Congress.

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Funding supports cooperative conservation projects that protects Asian elephants and their habitat by providing scientific research, law enforcement and education.

I support this noncontroversial bill, and again commend the gentleman from New Jersey (Mr. SAXTON), the author of the original Asian Elephant Conservation Act, for his unwavering commitment to international wildlife conservation.

Mr. Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

Mrs. McMORRIS RODGERS. Mr. Speaker, I rise in support of H.R. 465, the Asian Elephant Conservation Reauthorization Act. This legislation will extend the Asian Elephant Conservation Fund at the existing authorization levels until September 30, 2012.

In the early 1900s, there were less than 40,000 wild Asian elephants living throughout the world. In response to this international wildlife crisis, the gentleman from New Jersey (Mr. SAXTON) introduced the Asian Elephant Conservation Act. Since 1997, the Secretary of the Interior has reviewed over 300 proposals to assist Asian elephants, and 183 grants have been awarded to various entities. These projects have received \$7.8 million in Federal funds and \$11.3 million in private matching funds.

This conservation fund has had a profound impact on protecting Asian elephants, and there is no question that these projects have stopped this species' slide into extinction. This is a sound investment of a small amount of Federal tax dollars. I urge an “aye” vote on H.R. 465.

Mr. SAXTON. Mr. Speaker, as the author of this legislation, I am pleased the House is now considering H.R. 465. This simple noncontroversial legislation will extend the Asian Elephant Conservation Fund at existing authorization levels of up to \$5 million each year until September 30, 2012.

During our public hearing on H.R. 465, the Fish and Wildlife Service, which administers this Fund, testified that: “The Asian Elephant Conservation Act has greatly enhanced the conservation status of the Asian elephant”.

There are currently only about 40,000 wild Asian elephants living in south and southeastern Asia. As a result, this species is listed on our Endangered Species Act, on Appendix I of CITES and on the World Conservation Union's Red List.

In response to the ongoing slaughter of this keystone species, Congress adopted the Asian Elephant Conservation Act which I was pleased to sponsor in 1997. In the decade since its enactment, the Secretary of the Interior has carefully reviewed over 300 conservation projects designed to save Asian elephants for future generations. The Secretary has approved 183 of these grant proposals which

have received \$9 million in Federal funds and \$11.3 million in private matching funds.

As every witness testified, there is an overwhelming need to extend this important conservation program and there is no question that these conservation funds have had a profound impact on protecting this irreplaceable species. While everyone enjoys seeing elephants at the National Zoo, it is far more important that they continue to exist in the wild in Burma, India and Thailand. The road to extinction is a one-way street and we must work to ensure that the Asian elephant does not make that journey.

I am proud to urge my colleagues to vote "aye" on H.R. 465, the Asian Elephant Conservation Reauthorization Act. It is an appropriate and sound investment of U.S. tax dollars.

Mrs. McMORRIS RODGERS. Mr. Speaker, I yield back the balance of my time.

Mr. GRIJALVA. Mr. Speaker, I yield back the balance of my time.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from Arizona (Mr. GRIJALVA) that the House suspend the rules and pass the bill, H.R. 465, as amended.

The question was taken; and (two-thirds being in the affirmative) the rules were suspended and the bill, as amended, was passed.

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

NATIONAL UNDERGROUND RAILROAD NETWORK TO FREEDOM AMENDMENTS ACT OF 2007

Mr. GRIJALVA. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the bill (H.R. 1239) to amend the National Underground Railroad Network to Freedom Act of 1998 to provide additional staff and oversight of funds to carry out the Act, and for other purposes, as amended.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The text of the bill is as follows:

H.R. 1239

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,

SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.

This Act may be cited as the "National Underground Railroad Network to Freedom Amendments Act of 2007".

SEC. 2. AUTHORIZING APPROPRIATIONS FOR SPECIFIC PURPOSES.

The National Underground Railroad Network to Freedom Act of 1998 (16 U.S.C. 4691 et seq.) is amended—

- (1) by striking section 3(d);
- (2) by striking section 4(d); and
- (3) by adding at the end the following new section:

"SEC. 5. AUTHORIZATION OF APPROPRIATIONS.

"(a) AMOUNTS.—There are authorized to be appropriated to carry out this Act \$2,500,000 for each fiscal year, to be allocated as follows:

"(1) \$2,000,000 is to be used for the purposes of section 3.

"(2) \$500,000 is to be used for the purposes of section 4.

"(b) RESTRICTIONS.—No amounts may be appropriated for the purposes of this Act except to the Secretary for carrying out the responsibilities of the Secretary as set forth in this Act."

SEC. 3. EFFECTIVE DATE.

The amendments made by section 2 shall take effect at the beginning of the fiscal year immediately following the date of the enactment of this Act.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentleman from Arizona (Mr. GRIJALVA) and the gentlewoman from Washington (Mrs. McMORRIS RODGERS) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Arizona.

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. GRIJALVA. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 legislative days to revise and extend their remarks and include extraneous material on the bill under consideration.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from Arizona?

There was no objection.

Mr. GRIJALVA. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

H.R. 1239, introduced by the gentleman from Florida (Mr. HASTINGS), seeks to further the commitment made by Congress with the passage of the National Underground Railroad Network to Freedom Act of 1998 by reconfiguring the authorization of funds to carry out the act.

Mr. Speaker, the Underground Railroad was a historic protest movement against slavery which helped escaped slaves find freedom in Northern States and Canada prior to the Civil War.

The National Underground Railroad Network to Freedom Act of 1998 established the Underground Network to Freedom Program administered by the National Park Service. Today the program carries out important activities in more than 27 States and the District of Columbia.

Mr. Speaker, I would like to commend my friend and colleague from Florida (Mr. HASTINGS) for his work on this legislation. He has been a real leader in this bipartisan effort to enhance the Underground Railroad Network to Freedom Program. We support passage of H.R. 1239, as amended, and urge its adoption by the House today.

Mr. Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

Mrs. McMORRIS RODGERS. Mr. Speaker, I rise in support of H.R. 1239, and yield myself such time as I may consume.

I would like to commend the sponsor, the gentleman from Florida (Mr. HASTINGS), as well as the chairman of the subcommittee Mr. GRIJALVA, for explaining this bill. We appreciate the work that has been done to improve the bill, and look forward to see the program succeed. I urge Members' support.

Mr. Speaker, I yield back the balance of my time.

Mr. GRIJALVA. Mr. Speaker, I yield such time as he may consume to the gentleman from Florida (Mr. HASTINGS), the author and sponsor of this legislation.

Mr. HASTINGS of Florida. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in strong support of H.R. 1239, the National Underground Railroad Network to Freedom Reauthorization Act. I introduced this legislation with my good friend, the gentleman from Delaware (Mr. CASTLE).

The widespread bipartisan support this legislation has received with 67 cosponsors and endorsement by the National Parks Conservation Association has demonstrated that black history is synonymous with American history as life experience shared by all citizens of America.

I would like to thank Chairman RAHALL and Mr. DON YOUNG of the Natural Resources Committee for bringing this important legislation to the floor, and I would especially like to thank the gentleman from Arizona (Mr. GRIJALVA), the subcommittee chairman, and his counterpart, Representative ROB BISHOP, for their support. And my congratulations to Mrs. McMORRIS RODGERS on her recent addition to her family and her finding time to come and support this legislation as well.

With passage of this legislation, I hope that the National Park Service will give the National Underground Railroad Network to Freedom its due priority with adequate staffing to maintain the growing network. Toward that end, I would also like to thank the staff of the respective committees who helped to expedite this matter.

Mr. Speaker, when I joined my esteemed former colleague, as did many other Members, and the person to whom I am referring is Representative Lou Stokes, in 1998, he led the effort to establish the National Underground Railroad to Freedom. I don't think any of us could have foreseen the emergence of the National Park Service as one of the largest stewards of black history in the United States. Nor could we have predicted the rapidly expanding support and interest for one of the most intriguing multicultural collaborations in the history of our Nation.

The Network to Freedom is a key feature that diversifies engagement in interpretive opportunities of our National Park System. It has grown to 300 programs, sites, and partners in 28 States and the District of Columbia. This network is a national treasure of historic buildings, routes, programs, projects, and museums with thematic connections to the Underground Railroad.

The legislation before us today appropriately adjusts the authorization levels for the Network to Freedom to reflect the growth of interest nationally, and the resulting expansion of opportunities. These adjustments will help to resolve the financial challenges facing the Network to Freedom that include the lack of consistent development grants and administrative support for affiliates.

Mr. Speaker, this bill protects the interpretive interests of our National Park System by providing the necessary support staff and oversight for